

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 00702 260941Z

ACTION EA-09

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 0702

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS, US

SUBJECT: NDP CHAIRMAN STRESSES BALANCE, HARMONY AND MODERATION
IN HIS NEW YEAR'S PRESS CONFERENCE

REF: (A) SEOUL 0664 (250850Z), (B) SEOUL 0278 (120820Z JAN 77)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUMMARY: IN HIS RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT PAK'S NEW YEARS'S PRESS
CONFERENCE, NDP CHAIRMAN YI CHOL-SUNG PEPPERED GOVERNMENT WITH
MILD BUT OFTEN SPECIFIC CRITICISMS. MAIN THRUST OF NDP PRESS
CONFERENCE, HOWEVER, STRESSED BALANCE, HARMONY, AND MODERATION
IN NDP ROLE AND ANY PROPOSED CHANGES IN PRESENT SYSTEM. END SUMMARY

1. ON JANUARY 26, NDP CHAIRMAN YI CHOL-SUNG RESPONDED TO
PRESIDENT PAK'S NEW YEAR'S PRESS CONFERENCE IN THIRTY MINUTE
PRESENTATION OF HIS OWN, FOLLOWED BY BRIEF QUESTIONING BY PRESS.
CHAIRMAN YI LISTED NDP'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROPOSALS,
OFTEN DIFFERING WITH PRESENT GOVT. POLICY BUT COUCHING HIS
DIFFERENCES IN MODERATE TERMS. IN ADDITION TO OFTEN REPEATED
CALLS FOR HARMONY AND BALANCE, HE DESCRIBED ONE OF NDP'S MAJOR
GOALS AS ACHIEVING "DEMOCRATIC NORMALIZATION OF DOMESTIC POLICIES."
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PAGE 02 SEOUL 00702 260941Z

2. CURRENT POLITICS. YI SPECIFICALLY CALLED FOR :

(A) REPEAL OF EMERGENCY MEASURE 9 AS IT HAS BECOME FOCUS OF
INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM OF ROK;

(B) RETURN OF ALL E.M. 9 DETAINEES (INCLUDING MYONGDONG
DEFENDANTS) TO ACTIVE ROLES IN SOCIETY;

(C) RESTORATION AND GUARANTEE OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY;

(D) REVITALIZATION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, POLITICAL PARTIES
AND PRESS. AND

(E) PROPOSED CONSULTATIVE BODY TO RECOMMEND LOCAL AUTONOMY,
FIRST TO CITIES, AND THEN TO COUNTY AND VILLAGE LEVEL GOVT.

3. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. YI MAINTAINED THAT ROK DOMESTIC
SITUATION IS VULNERABLE TO CRITICISM BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
AND THUS MAKES ROK'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION INSECURE. OF
COURSE, PEACE HAS BEEN KEPT BY FOUR MAJOR POWERS IN AREA BUT HE
PREDICTED THIS BALANCE WOULD CHANGE IN THREE TO FOUR YEARS.
ALTHOUGH AGREEING WITH "INTENT" OF PRESIDENT PAK'S PROPOSAL OF
NON-AGGRESSION TREATY WITH NORTH AND U.S. CONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL,
YI SAID WAR CANNOT BE PREVENTED BY PEICE OF PAPER OR TREATY. HE
STRESSED THAT DEPARTURE OF U.S. TROOPS WOULD BE DANGEROUS
UNLESS (A) MILITARY BALANCE WAS ACHIEVED BETWEEN
NORTH AND SOUTH; (B) KOREA/JAPAN/U.S. COOPERATIVE "SYSTEM" WERE
REINFORCED; (C) KOREA/US MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY SHOULD ALSO
BE REINFORCED IN SUBSTANTIALLY SAME MANNER AS US/NATO AND US/
PHILIPPINE TREATIES; (D) UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE SHOULD BE SENT
TO DMZ; AND (E) THERE MUST BE FOUR-POWER GUARANTEE OF PEACE ON
PENINSULA. AS FOR KOREAN DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS, HE NOTED THAT
KOREA WAS STILL TOO DEPENDENT ON ITS ALLIES. IT SHOULD REEXAMINE
PRESENT CHINESE AND RUSSIAN POLICY TOWARD ITSELF.

4. ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERNAL POLICIES. YI CALLED ROKG'S
FOURTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN MUCH "TOO GREEDY." HE ASKED THAT NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY'S BUDGET AND SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE BE MADE PERMANENT
INSTEAD OF AD HOC. HE DEPLORED RECENTLY DISCOVERED "IRREGULARITIES"
(READ CORRUPTION) IN SOCIETY AND CALLED FOR POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE
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PAGE 03 SEOUL 00702 260941Z

OF BANKS. IN LABOR FIELD, HE MADE TRADITIONAL CALL FOR RIGHT TO
FORM UNIONS, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND ACTIONS AND ASKED FOR
COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBILITY OF MINIMUM WAGE FOR LOWER
INCOME BRACKETS. HE CRITICIZED CULTURAL POLICIES AS OFTEN FRONT
FOR ROKG PROPAGANDA, EDUCATION AS NOT CONCERNED ENOUGH WITH
HUMAN PROBLEMS, AND URBAN POLICIES AS DISREGARDING IMPORTANCE
OF PROPERTY RIGHTS, WHICH HE CLAIMED AS IMPORTANT AS HUMAN RIGHTS.

5. IN HIS QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH PRESS, CHAIRMAN YI
OPINED THAT NORTH KOREA'S JANUARY 26 CALL FOR POLITICAL CON-
SULTATIONS WAS NOT DIRECT RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT'S NEW YEAR'S
PRESS CONFERENCE PROPOSAL. YI SUGGESTED THAT RED CROSS WOULD BE
BETTER CHANNEL FOR ANY TALKS AND WORRIED THAT NORTH'S GESTURE
WAS PEGGED FOR SENSATIONALISM AND NOT SUBSTANCE. DURING Q&A HE
MADE ONE REFERENCE TO PAK TONG-SON SCANDAL, NOTING KOREAN PUBLIC
REPERCUSSIONS FROM SCANDAL COULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO LACK OF FREE
PRESS. IN REPLY TO WHETHER HE WOULD SEEK MEETING WITH PRESIDENT,
YI NOTED THAT IN A FUNCTIONING TWO-PARTY SYSTEM SUCH A
CONSULTATION WOULD BE HELPFUL.

6. PRESS REPORTS OF SPEECH HAVE NOT CARRIED REFERENCES TO REPEAL OF EMERGENCY MEASURE 9 AND ALMOST ALL DETAILS OF OTHER PROPOSALS A THROUGH D LISTED IN PARA2. DRP SPOKESMAN NOTED YI GAVE AN ACCURATE PRESENTATION OF NEED FOR DOMESTIC REFORMS. YUCHONGHOE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT HE HIMSELF WAS UNAWARE THAT DEMOCRACY NEEDED RESTORING HERE.

7. COMMENT: AS YI CHOL-SUNG TOLD AMBASSADOR (REF A), HE WAS STRIVING FOR MODERATION AND HE APPEARS TO HAVE ACHIEVED IT, USING A LITTLE BUCKSHOT AIMED AT ROKG TO MAINTAIN HIS CREDIBILITY AS OPPOSITION PARTY HEAD. YI'S PROGRAM IS STANDARD NDP STUFF.
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